- **Which path should you follow?**

the path of the politically appointed caliphs or path of the divinely appointed imams?

- **Did Prophet Muhammed before he passed appointed leaders for us to follow or did he leave it up to his ummah to chose their own leaders?**

. **"The Islamic religion will continue, until the hour has been established, or you have been ruled over by 12 Caliphs, all of them being from Quraish"**

Sahih Muslim, hadith number 4483, English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui

Who are these 12 caliphs that the above hadith is reffering to ?

- **Did Allah tell Muslims follow the Quran and Sunnah or the Quran and Ahlul-Bayt**

Which path should you follow, the path of the politically appointed caliphs or path of the divinely appointed imams

"The Islamic religion will continue, until the hour has been established, or you have been ruled over by 12 Caliphs, all of them being from Quraish"

Sahih Muslim, hadith number 4483, English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui

Now just ponder over these ahadith The Islamic religion will continue - the Muslims can suffer oppression, go through hardships etc. but Islam will remain intact, with all it's conditions, qualities and virtues as long as there exist these 12 Khalifa's. Think carefully, deen is attached to the ruling of 12 Khalifa's. The number 12 is of significance here, it can not apply to political leadership, Jalaladeen Suyuti in Tarikh ul Khulufa recounts that there were 4 Rightly guided khalifas', 14 khalifas' from Banu Ummayah and 49 Khalifas' from the Banu Abbasides.

The number 12 does not fit anywhere here, because the Prophet (saaws) was not talking about leaders appointed by men. The Prophet (saaws) was referring to absolute religious leadership, through which deen can be identified, it started at Ghadhir Khumm when the Prophet (saaws) declared before a gathering of 124,000 Sahaba "**Of whomsoever I am Maula (Master) Ali is his Maula".**

It was here that the succession to Prophethood, Imamate was declared. What is crucial is the verse which descended following the sermon declaring Ali (as)'s Wilayat.
"Today, I have perfected your religion and completed my bounty upon you, and I was satisfied that you religion be Islam" (Quran 5:3).

This verse makes it clear Allah (swt) did not declare the perfection of religion, the completion of his bounties and his satisfaction until Hadhrath Ali (as)'s Imamate was formally declared at the end of the Prophetic mission.

Recognition of Islam is through these 12 Khalifa's. Khalifa means, "to follow" they are the Prophet (saaws)'s khalifas' but they are our Imams for they lead us. These are the 12 Imams

Hadhrath Abu Bakr said that "**No one will be able to cross the Sirat (Path) leading to Heaven on the Day of Judgement unless he gets the stamp of Ali".**
Al Sawaiqh al Muhriqa, by Ahmad Ibn Hajar al Makki, page 126 (A book written against the Shi'a)

<u>Now lets us take a look at the two routes being adopted to reach the Deen.</u>

Sharra Fiqa Akbar by Mulla 'Ali Qari is the Hanafi Book of aqaid. On the very first page it is stated that the book sets out the aqeedah of Ahl'ul Sunnah wa al Jamaah. Everything set out in this book is the aqeedah of Hanafi Sunni Muslims. Mulla Ali Qari sets out who the 12 khalifas are:

1. Abu Bakr
2. Umar
3. Uthman
4. Ali
5. Mu'awiya
6. Yazid bin Mu’awiya
7. Abdul Malik bin Marwan
8. Walid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
9. Sulayman bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
10. Umar bin Abdul Aziz
11. Yazid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan
12. Hasham bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan

Taken from Sharra Fiqa Akbar, by Mulla Ali Qari, p 176 (publishers Muhammad Saeed and son, Qur'an Muhalla)"

This was one route, now lets have a look at the other path **– the path of the Ahlul Bayt e Muhammad (saww)**

1. Imam Ali ibn e Abi Talib (al-Murtaza) (as)
2. Imam al-Hassan (al Mujtaba) (as)
3. Imam al-Hussain bin Ali
4. Imam Ali bin al-Hussain (Zainul-Abideen) (as)
5. Imam Muhammad bin Ali (al-Baqir) (as)
6. Imam Ja'far bin Muhammad (al-Sadiq) (as)
7. Imam Musa bin Ja'far (al-Kazim) (as)
8. Imam Ali bin Musa (al-Reza) (as)
9. Imam Muhammad bin Ali (Taqi al-Jawaad) (as)
10. Imam Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi
11. Imam al-Hasan bin Ali (al-Askari) (as)
12. Imam Muhammad bin al-Hasan (al-Mahdi) (as)

It is incumbent that we search for that wasila through which deen can be recognised. Allah (swt) tells us in his glorious book "**Guide us to the right path, the path of those you have favoured" (1:6-7) and** your priority should be to seek those persons on the right path who will likewise guide you to it. This point can not be ignored; particularly when Rasulullah (saaws) warned that the Ummah would be divided in to 73 sects and that only one would be saved.

At the same time the Prophet (saaws) told us which party would be saved, when he said "**I am leaving amongst you two things, the Qur'an and my Ahlulbayt, if you follow them you will never go astray".**

Sahih Muslim, part 7, Kitab fada'il al-Sahabah [Maktabat wa Matba`at Muhammad `Ali Subayh wa Awladuhu: Cairo] pp. 122-123
al-'Imam al-Hafiz Abu `Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahihayn* [Dar al-Ma`rifah li al-Tiba`ah wa al-Nashr: Beirut), vol. iii, pp. 109-110

Did Allah tell Muslims follow the Quran and Sunnah or the Quran and Ahlul-Bayt

Based on a parallel (Mutawatir) tradition upon whose authenticity all Muslims agree, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) informed his followers in several occasions that he would leave them two precious/weighty things and that if Muslims adhere to both of them, they will never go astray after him. They are the Book of Allah (Quran) and the Members of the House of the Prophet (Ahlul-Bayt), peace be upon them all.

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim as well as many other sources that:

Someday (after his last pilgrimage) the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) stood to give us a speech beside a pond which is known as Khum (Ghadir Khum) which is located between Mecca and Medina. Then he praised Allah and reminded Him, and then said: "O' people! Behold! It seems the time approached when I shall be called away (by Allah) and I shall answer that call. Behold! I am leaving for you two precious things. First of them is the book of Allah in which there is light and guidance... The other one is my Ahlul-Bayt. I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. I remind you in the name of Allah about my Ahlul-Bayt. (three times)."

Sunni Reference:
- Sahih Muslim, Chapter of the virtues of the companions, section of the virtues of Ali, 1980 Edition Pub. in Saudi Arabia, Arabic version, v4, p1873, Tradition #36.
- And many others such as Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad (see below).

For the English version of Sahih Muslim, see Chapter CMXCVI, v4, p1286, Tradition #5920

As we can see in the above tradition in Sahih Muslim, not only Ahlul-Bayt has been put beside the Quran, but also it has been mentioned three times by the Prophet (PBUH&HF).

Despite the fact that the author of Sahih Muslim and many other Sunni traditionalists have recorded the above tradition in their authentic books, it is regrettable that the majority of Sunnis are unaware of its existence at the best, or deny it at the worst. Their counter argument is that the most reliable tradition in this regard is the one recorded by al-Hakim in his al-Mustadrak, on the authority of Abu Huraira, attributing to the Messenger of Allah saying:

"I leave amongst you two things that if you follow or act upon, you will not go astray after me: The Book of God and my Sunnah (traditions)."

There is no doubt that ALL Muslims are required to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH&HF). However, the question remains that which Sunnah is genuine and which one is invented later and was falsely attributed to the Prophet.

On tracing the source of this report of Abu Huraira which states "Quran and Sunnah," we found out that it has NOT been recorded in any of the six authentic Sunni collections of the traditions (Sihah Sittah). Not only that, but also al-Bukhari, al-Nisa'i, and al-Dhahabi and many others rated this report (Quran and Sunnah) as weak because of its weak Isnad. It should be noted that although the book of al-Hakim is an important Sunni collection of traditions, yet it is ranked inferior to the six major Sunni books. This is while Sahih Muslim is in the second rank among the six Sunni collections of traditions.
al-Tirmidhi reported that the "Quran and Ahlul-Bayt" version of the tradition is traced to 30+ companions. Ibn Hajar al-Haythami reported that he knows of 20+ companions witnessed that also. This is while the "Quran and Sunnah" version reported by al-Hakim has only one source!

Thus we must conclude that the "Quran and Ahlul-Bayt" version is much more reliable. Moreover al-Hakim has also mentioned the "Quran and Ahlul-Bayt" version in his book (al-Mustadrak) through several chain of authorities and confirmed that the "Quran and Ahlul-Bayt" version of the tradition is authentic based on the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Moreover, the word "Sunnah" by itself does not serve the purpose of knowledge. All Muslims irrespective to their persuasions claim that they follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). The differences among Muslims come from the transmitted Prophetic traditions through different avenues. Such traditions serve as explanatory means of the Holy Quran upon whose authenticity all Muslims agree. Thus divergence in the transmitted traditions, which in turn has led to differing interpretation of Quran and the prophetic Sunnah, has created numerous versions of Sunnah. All Muslims, as a result, splintered into different schools, groups, offshoots, which is believed to add up to seventy three groups. All of them are obeying their own version of Sunnah which they claim to be the true one.

Which of these groups follow the true Sunnah of the Prophet? Which one (out of 73 groups) will be the prosperous one, and will survive?

Al-Azhar Verdict on the Shia

What follows is the Fatwa (religious verdict/ruling) of one of the Sunni world's most revered scholars, Shaikh Mahmood Shaltoot with regard to the Shia. Shaikh Shaltoot was the head of the renowned al-Azhar Theological school in Egypt, one of the main centers of Sunni scholarship in the world. It should be of interest to know that a few decades ago, a group of Sunni and Shia scholars formed a center at al-Azhar by the name of "Dar al-Taqreeb al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah" which translates into "Center for bringing together the various Islamic schools of thought". The aim of the effort, as the name of the center indicates, was to bridge the gap between the various schools of thought, and bring about a mutual respect, understanding and appreciation of each school's contributions to the development of Islamic Jurisprudence, among the scholars of the different schools, so that they may in turn guide their followers toward the ultimate goal of unity, and of clinging to one rope, as the well-known Quranic verse, "Hold fast to the Rope of Allah and do not diverge" clearly demands of Muslims.

This massive effort finally bore its major fruit when Shaikh Shaltoot made the declaration whose translation is appended below. It should be made unequivocally clear as well, that al-Azhar's official position, vis a vis the propriety of following any of the Madhaahib, including the Shi'ite Imami school, has remained unchanged since Shaikh Shaltoot's declaration.
Some people who follow pseudo-scholars in Hijaz may beg to differ; that notwithstanding, what you see below is the view held by the overwhelming majority of Sunni scholars, and not just those at al-Azhar. Let it be known to those who strive to divide us, that their efforts are but in vain.
For the readership's reference the phrase "al-Shia al-Imamiyyah al-Ithna 'Ashariyyah" means the Twelver Imami Shi'ite School of thought which comprises the overwhelming majority of Shi'ites today. The phrase "Twelver Shi'ites" is used interchangeably with "Ja'fari Shi'ites" and "Imami Shi'ites" in various literature. They are merely different names for the same school of thought.
"al-Shia al-Zaidiyyah" are a minority among the Shi'ites, concentrated mainly in Yemen located in the Eastern part of Arabian peninsula. For a more detailed description of the Zaidis vs. the Twelver Shi'ites, please refer to the book, "Shi'ite Islam" written by the great Shi'ite scholar, Allamah Tabataba'i, and translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and published by the State University of New York Press (SUNY).
And as for Shaikh Shaltoot's declaration ...

Head Office of al-Azhar University:

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL
Text of the Verdict (Fatwa) Issued by His Excellency
Shaikh al-Akbar Mahmood Shaltoot, Head of the al-Azhar University,
on Permissibility of Following "al-Shia al-Imamiyyah"School of Thought

His Excellency was asked:

Some believe that, for a Muslim to have religiously correct worship and dealing, it is necessary to follow one of the four known schools of thought, whereas, "al-Shia al-Imamiyyah" school of thought is not one of them nor "al-Shia al-Zaidiyyah." Do your Excellency agree with this opinion, and prohibit following "al-Shia al-Imamiyyah al-Ithna Ashariyyah" school of thought, for example?

His Excellency replied:

1) Islam does not require a Muslim to follow a particular Madh'hab (school of thought). Rather, we say: every Muslim has the right to follow one of the schools of thought which has been correctly narrated and its verdicts have been compiled in its books. And, everyone who is following such Madhahib [schools of thought] can transfer to another school, and there shall be no crime on him for doing so.

2) The Ja'fari school of thought, which is also known as "al-Shia al- Imamiyyah al-Ithna Ashariyyah" (i.e., The Twelver Imami Shi'ites) is a school of thought that is religiously correct to follow in worship as are other Sunni schools of thought.

Muslims must know this, and ought to refrain from unjust prejudice to any particular school of thought, since the religion of Allah and His Divine Law (Shari'ah) was never restricted to a particular school of thought. Their jurists (Mujtahidoon) are accepted by Almighty Allah, and it is permissible to the "non-Mujtahid" to follow them and to accord with their teaching whether in worship (Ibadaat) or transactions (Mu'amilaat).

Signed, Mahmood Shaltoot.

The above Fatwa was announced on July 6, 1959 from the Head of al-Azhar University, and was subsequently published in many publications in the middle east which include, but are not limited to:

1. al-Sha'ab newspaper (Egypt), issue of July 7, 1959.
2. al-Kifah newspaper (Lebanon), issue of July 8, 1959.

The above segment can also be found in the book "Inquiries about Islam", by Muhammad Jawad Chirri, Director of the Islamic Center of America, 1986 Detroit, Michigan.

Who are the most beloved individuals to the Prophet Muhammed (saw) whose love has been made compulsory in the Qur'an?

When seeking to identify the most beloved in the eyes of Rasulullah (s) one need to look no further than the Qur'an. Allah (swt) states the duty that has been placed on the Muslims:

Say: "No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin." (42:23).

Jalaladin Suyuti in Tafsir Durre Manthur under the commentary of this verse records the following:

Abdullah ibne Abbas narrates 'When this verse descended the people asked who are these close relatives whose love had been made compulsory?' Rasulullah said they are 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn'.

Other leading lights of Ahl'ul Sunnah have also conformed that this verse came down in respect of these four individuals:

1. Hilayat al Awliya page 201 Volume 3
2. Mustadrak al Hakim Volume 3 page 172
3. Sawaiq al Muhriqa page 101
4. Usdul Ghaba page 367 Volume 5
5. Kanz al-`ummal page 217 Volume 1

Clearly these four individuals are the most beloved to Rasulullah (s) to the extent that Allah (swt) has declared love towards them as the only wage required by Rasulullah (s), for providing the ummah with Allah's message – Islam. Therefore, their love is a part of the Deen

The term Rafidi
Why Shi'as are called Rafidi's?

We will enlighten our readers by citing the following Sunni sources:
1. Al-Ghunyat liTalibin, Volume 1 page 409
2. Fathul Bari Sharh Sahih Bukhari Volume 14 page 450 Chapter 9
Fathul Bari:

Anyone that deems 'Ali to be superior to Abu Bakr and Umar, is a Thashee, a Ghali (extremist) and is referred to as a Rafidi.

Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani writes in his esteemed work Al-Ghunya li-Talibin (Published by Al-Baz Publishing, Inc. Hollywood, Florida):
"As for the Shia, they are also known by several other names including Rafida? They came to be called Shia` for the simple reason that they relied to support the cause of Ali and considered him superior to all of the rest of the companions. The Rafida were so called because of their rejection [Rafd] of the majority of the companions and their refusal to accept the imamate of Abu Bakar and Umar."

Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth (Al-Ghunya li-Talibin Tariq al-Haqq), Volume 1, page 409

Imam Shaafi said that the Sahaba and all the Banu Hashim were Rafidi

We read in Ahl'ul Sunnah's authority work al Athaab al Jheel page 33:
"Imam Shaafi and, according to the pen of Ibn Hajr Asqalani, all those lovers of 'Ali that deem him to be superior to Abu Bakr and Umar are Rafidi. The conclusion of Ibn Hajr's research is many major Sahaba, such as esteemed Sahaba, like Zaid bin Arqam, Abu Dharr and Burhaida, the Banu Hashim and Banu Abdul Muttalib are Rafidi, since they were his lovers, and deemed him superior to Abu Bakr and Umar".

Imam Shaafi was a Rafidi

Ibn Hajjar Makki records the statement of Imam of Ahl'ul Sunnah Muhammad Idris Shaafi:

'If loving the Wasi of the Prophet, Ali Murtadha a Rafidi, then verily amongst all the people I am the greatest Rafidi? From the plain of Mina I will shout to all those standing or sitting, if loving the family of the Prophet makes you a Rafidi, then I testify before the mankind and Djinns I am a Rafidi"
Sawaiq al Muhriqah, page 449 & 450 (Faisalabad, Pakistan)

Imam Razi recorded the fact Imam Shaafi was a Rafidi

We read in Tafseer Kabeer Volume 7 page 391 part 28, the verse of Mawaddath:

"If a Rafidi is one who loves the family of the Prophet (s), then I testify before the mankind and Djinns that I am a Rafidi"
Alhamdolillah we the lovers of Maula 'Ali feel no offence at being called Shi'a or termed Rafidi.

Mulla Ali Qari's acknowledgement if those that deem 'Ali superior are Rafidi then we are all Rafidi

We read in Sharh Fiqh Akbar page 63 Dhikr 'Afzaal al Naas badh al Nabi':

"A Sunni scholar said if we believe 'Ali to be superior it is not due to any basis rather believing that 'Ali is superior is compulsory since his virtues are many. One individual raised an objection, one who deems 'Ali as superior has smell of Rafidi. Another said 'This is a lie, that this smell of Rafdiyath, if we accept the superiority of 'Ali smells of Rafdiyath from the Sunnah, then Sunni traditions will leave no one as a Sunni, rather everyone is a Rafidi. Do not fight in the Deen, nor abandon the truth"

Comment
We appeal to justice, all the injustices that have perpetuated against 'Ali (as) and his Shi'a will be asked of by these Nasibis(haters of Imam Ali and his family) on the Day of Judgement. It is a miracle that despite their strenuous efforts to bring down the Fadail (attributes and virtues) of Maula 'Ali, the Ahl'ul Sunnah Ulema have constantly deemed our Imam (as) as most superior.

The Salaf of the Sunnis were Shia

We have already cited this reference from Tuhfa Ithna Ashari page 27:

"The first Sect was the Shi'a, and these were the Salaf of the Ahl'ul Sunnah"

Tuhfa Ithna Ashari (Urdu) page 5, published in Karachi

The Muhajireen and Ansar were Shi'a

Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi writes:

The title Shi'a was first given to those Muhajireen and Ansar who gave allegiance (bay'ah) to Ali (may Allah enlighten his face). They were his steadfast faithful followers during his (Ali's) caliphate. They remained close to him; they always fought his enemies, and kept on following Ali's commands and prohibitions. The true Shi'a are these who came in 37 Hijri"

Tuhfa Ithna 'Ashariyyah, (Gift to the Twelvers) (Urdu version published in Karachi)
Note: 37 Hijri -the year Imam Ali (as) fought Mu'awiya at Sifeen.

The Shi'a were the Sahaba and Tabieen

We read in Tuhfa page 6:

"The first Shi'a were the Sahaba and Tabi'een"

Imam Abu Hanifa was a Shi'a

Imam of Ahl'ul Sunnah al Muhaddith Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi had in fact referred Abu Hanifa as
a Shi'a. He writes in Tuhfa Ithna Ashariyya page 25:

"Imam Abu Hanifa [r] was counted amongst the Shi'a of Kufa and he considered Zaid bin 'Ali bin Husayn to be on the path of truth"

During that era Islamic sciences were being spread through the empire and students were benefiting from the teachings of scholars with differing views, far and wide. Students took the opportunity to gain knowledge from Ulema, in the same way Abu Hanifa learnt from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as).

What Abu hanifah and Imam malik said about Imam Jafar As-Sadiq

Abu Hanifeh the leader of the Hanafi school of thought, said:

"I did not find anybody more knowledgeable in jurisprudence than Jafar-ibn-Muhammad. Once Mansoor (the Abbassid ruler) told me: people are very attached to Jafar ibn-Muhammad. I ask of you to prepare religious questions so difficult that he will not be able to answer. After I prepared the questions, Mansoor al - Abbassi called me to his court. When I entered, I saw Jafar ibn-Muhammad sitting next to Mansoor. I started to ask the forty questions which I had prepared . In response to each question, he (Imam Jafar Sadiq) expressed the views of each school of thought of Islam and then the view of the Shi'ite sect. Sometimes the Shi'ite view was the same as the others and Sometimes it differed. Jafar ibn Muhammad replied to all forty questions in the same manner."

Then abu-Hanifeh goes on to say: "Didn't we (Muslims) believe that the most knowledgeable of us is the one who is well acquainted and well informed of the different views of the people"
(Tazkerat-al-Hifaz Vol.1 p.1 57)

Malik ibn Ans, the leader of the Maliki school of thought said:

"Several times I had the Opportunity to meet Jafar ibn Muhammad. Whenever I saw him he was either praying or reciting the Holy Qur'an or fasting. He was among thit pious scholars who. feared God."
(The Book of Malik, written by Abu-Zohreh P.28)

The Sunni Imam, Malik b. Anas, the founder of the Maliki school of law, said:

"No eye ever saw, no ear ever heard, and no heart ever imagined anyone superior to Ja'far b. Muhammad in virtue, knowledge, worship and piety. [6]
[6] Ibn Hajar al Asqalani, Tadhib al Tadhib, Hyderabad, 1325 A.H, vol. 2, p. 104

"No eyes have ever seen, no ears have ever heard, and no heart has ever found anybody greater than Jafar ibn Muhammad Sadiq in knowledge, piety, and worship."
(The Book of Rawassol va Wasilah of Ibn-Teimieh p.52)

Is Prophet Muhammed (as) pleased with someone who curses Allah, Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) and Imaam Ali (as)?

"Ibn Kathir in al Bidayah records that one unlawful and outrageous practice started by Mu'awiya was that he and his governors would curse Hadhrath 'Ali during the Friday sermon from the Imam's position. This took such an extreme that this practice even took place in the Mosque of the Prophet, in front of the grave of the Prophet (saws), the cursing of the most beloved relative would take place, in the presence of Hadhrath 'Ali's family who would hear this abuse with their own ears

(Tabari Volume 4 page 188, Ibn Athir Volume 3" page 234, al Bidayah Volume 8 page 259 and Volume 9 page 80).

Was Mauwiya following the sunnah and practices of the Prophet Muhammed when he institutionalized the practice of cursing of Imam Ali which lasted for 80 years?

Some Hadiths of Rasulullah (s) about loving Imam Ali (as)

"Loving Ali is the sign of belief, and hating Ali is the sign of hypocrisy"

1. Sahih Muslim, v1, p48;
2. Sahih Tirmidhi, v5, p643;
3. Sunan Ibn Majah, v1, p142;
4. Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal v1, pp 84,95,128
5. Tarikh al-Kabir, by al-Bukhari (the author of Sahih), v1, part 1, p202
6. Hilyatul Awliya', by Abu Nu'aym, v4, p185
7. Tarikh, by al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi, v14, p462

The Messenger of Allah said: **"Whoever hurts Ali, has hurt me"**
Sunni references:
1. Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v3, p483
2. Fada'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Hanbal, v2, p580, Tradition #981
3. Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p129
4. al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p263
5. Ibn Habban, Ibn Abd al-Barr, etc.

"Whoever reviles/curses Ali, has reviled/cursed me"

1. al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p121, who mentioned this tradition is Authentic -
2. Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v6, p323
3. Fada'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Hanbal, v2, p594, Tradition #1011
4. Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v9, p130
5. Mishkat al-Masabih, English version, Tradition #6092
6. Tarikh al-Khulafa, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p173
7. and many others such as Tabarani, Abu Ya'la, etc.

The Messenger of Allah said:
"Whoever curses (or verbally abuses) Ali, he has, in fact, cursed me, and whoever has cursed me, he has cursed Allah, and whoever has cursed Allah, then Allah will throw him into he Hell-fire."
Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v6, p33

Rasulullah (s) said:
"Whoever leaves Ali, leaves me, whoever leaves me, leaves Allah"
[Kanz ul Ummal,hadith numbers 32974 - 32976, narrated by Abdullah ibne Umar {through twochains} and Abu Dharr Ghaffari (ra).

As we have already cited earlier, Rasulullah (s) also said:
"Whoever obeys 'Ali, obeys me, whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, whoever disobeys 'Ali, disobeys me, whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah"
[Kanz ul Ummal, hadith numbers 32973]

So these hadith tell us:
1. The sign of a Munafiq is hatred of Ali (as)
2. Whoever leaves, disobeys and curses 'Ali - in fact leaves, disobeys and curses Allah (swt)

Questions to ponder over
1. Did Mu'awiya curse 'Ali?
2. Is an individual who leaves, disobeys and curses Allah (swt) a Muslim?

This being the case, kindly explain why it is that the Ahl'ul Sunnah insist on giving Mu'awiya the title (ra) Radi Allah ho An (May Allah be pleased with him?
Is Allah (swt) pleased with someone that curses him?

Rasulullah (s) ordered the killing of Mu'awiya in the event of him becoming Khalifa

Imam if Ahl'ul Sunnah Dhahabi records this tradition in numerous places of his Mizan al-Itidal and deems the hadith to be Sahih:

"If you see Mu'awiya on my pulpit then kill him"

(see Volume 2 page 17; Volume 2 page 129 on the authority of Abu Said al Khudri; Volume 7 page 324 and Volume 8 page 74**).**

Other Sunni Ulema have also recorded this hadith
"Tadhib al Tadhib by Ibn Hajar Asqalani Volume 5 page 110 [Hyderabad edition];
Kunz al Haqaiq by al Mu'awi page 9,
Tabaqat by Ibn Sad Volume 4 page 134-135 [Leiden edition],
al Kamil fi Safa al Rijal Volume 2 page 146 hadith number 343,
Ansab al Ashraf Volume 5 page 136,
Waq'at Sifeen page 216 and 221, Tareekh Tabari Volume 8 page 186.

An interesting event in connection with this event can be located in Ansab al Ashraf Volume 5 page 136:

On one occasion an Ansari individual wanted to kill Mu'awiya, the people said, 'the sword can not be raised during the reign of Umar, they said that he should write to Umar and seek his consent.

He replied ' I heard that Rasulullah had said "If you see Mu'awiya on my pulpit then kill him".

The people confirmed that they had also heard the hadith, but said we have not carried out this action, so let us write to Umar on the matter, which they did, but Umar did not write back to resolve the matter, until he died"

Did you know that Mu'awiya even killed Hadhrath Ayesha (the mother of the believers) so as to secure the bayya for his son Yazeed ?

We read in Ahl'ul Sunnah's authoritative work Habeeb as Sayyar Volume page 58:

"In 56 Hijri Mu'awiya arrived in Madina to get people to give bayya to Yazeed, in this regard (the bayya) Ayesha became upset with Mu'awiya and openly expressed her discontent.

Mu'awiya then instructed an acquaintance to dig a hole, cover it up and place a chair on the top of it and invite Ayesha to the house for a dinner. No sooner had Ayesha settled down on the chair that she fell through the hole that had been dug.

Mu'awiya order the hole to be covered, he then made his way from Madina to Makka".

Can Allah, Prophet Muhammed and any Muslim be pleased and have any respect for someone who kills Ayesha . She is the mother of the believers and no momin would ever contemplate killing his mother.

Imam Ali's duty was to kill the oath breakers and rebels

We read in al Bidaya Volume 7 page 304 "Dhikr Khwaarij" The texts of all three are similarly worded:

"'Ali said that I was ordered to fight three types of people
1. Nakisheen (oath breakers)
2. Qasatheen. (those who refrained from giving bayya to the Imam)
3. Marakeen (Khwaarij).

In Sharh Muqassad Volume 2 page 304, Allamah Sa`duddeen Taftazanee after narrating this hadith of Rasulullah (s), states clearly **"the oath breakers were Talha, Zubayr and Ayesha".**

In Matalib al Sa'ul p 68 we read

"The Sahaba and Ayesha fought Ali and they were amongst oath breakers, Ali fought Mu'awiya and he was amongst the Qasatheen"

In Usdul Ghaba page 114 Volume 4 "Dhikr 'Ali"

Abu Sa'id narrates: "Rasul ordered us to fight Nakisheen, Qasatheen and Marakeen, we asked under who he said Ali ibn abi Talib".

Also in Usdul Ghaba Volume 4 page 114 we read that:

"Someone asked Abu Ayub "Are you are using the same sword with which you stood beside Rasulullah (s) killing polytheists to now kill Muslims? He replied that Rasulullah (s) ordered that I kill those that break the oath of allegiance".

It is proven from these traditions that those who opposed 'Ali were breaking the oath of allegiance, the duty was to kill them this was based on the order of Rasulullah (s). Talha, Zubayr and Ayesha were at the forefront of this group.

The barking of Hawabs dogs at Ayesha proves she had left the right path

We read in al Imama wal Siyasa page 59 Chapter "Dhikr Jamal" with regards to Ayesha that:

"**When she began her opposition to 'Ali, she and her supporters began to make their way to Basra. On route, the dogs of Hawab began to bark at them. Ayesha asked Muhammad bin Talha "Which place is this?". He said "Its is Hawab" to which Hadhrath Ayesha replied "Take me back for on one occasion Rasulullah (s) said, 'Amongst you (wives) is one at whom the dogs of Hawab shall bark.' He (s) said to me specifically, 'Be careful in case it is you'." Muhammad bin Talha said 'Leave these things and proceed' and the Sahabi Abdullah bin Zubayr swore by Allah that they had left Hawab during the first part of the night, he brought some men who testified likewise. The Ulema of Islam have declared the event of Hawab to have been the first false testimony in Islam".**

Rasulullah's hadith 'Fitnah shall appear from the House of Ayesha' is clear proof that she was on the wrong path

We read the following tradition in Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith: 4.336

"**Narrated Abdullah: The Prophet stood up and delivered a sermon, and pointed to the house of Aisha, and said: "Fitna (trouble/sedition) is right here," saying three times, "from where the side of the Satan's head comes out."**

We also read in Sahih Muslim Arabic version, the Chapter of Seditions, v4, p2229 from Ibn
Umar: who said:

"**The Prophet of Allah (PBUH&HF) emerged from the house of Aisha and said. 'The pivot of disbelief is from here, where the horns of Satan will rise.'"**

Imam Ali was only accepted as the fourth rightly guided caliph in the year 230 AH/844AD

"Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`a" are the ones who believe in the legitimacy of the four "righteous caliphs," namely Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. This is known to everyone in our time. But the sad fact is that Ali ibn Abu Talib was not originally counted by "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah" among the "righteous caliphs;" they did not even recognize the legitimacy of his caliphate; rather, his name was added to the list at a very late time in history: in 230 A.H./844 A.D., during the lifetime of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

As for the *sahaba* who were not the followers of the school of Ahlul-Bayt, as well as the caliphs, kings, and princes who ruled the Muslims from the time of Abu Bakr and till the reign of the Abbaside caliph Muhammad ibn al-Rasheed al-Mu`tasim, they never recognized the caliphate of Ali ibn Abu Talib at all. Moreover, some of them used to curse him and regard him non-Muslim; otherwise, how did they justify cursing him from their pulpits?

When Mu`awiyah became the ruler, he went to the extreme limits in cursing him and ordering people to do likewise. Umayyad rulers, therefore, were consistent in every town and village in doing so for as long a period as eighty years.

Actually, the cursing, charging, and dissociation from him and his followers, went on beyond that. The Abbaside caliph al-Mutawakkil, for example, went as far in his hatred for Ali as desecrating his grave and the grave of his son Imam al-Husayn ibn Ali in the year 240 A.H./854 A.D.

Al-Waleed ibn Abd al-Malik, who was the "commander of the faithful" of his time, delivered a sermon one Friday in which he said, "The *hadith* saying that the Messenger of Allah once said (to Ali, as): `Your status to me is like that of Aaron to Moses' was altered from: `Your status to me is like that of Qarun to Moses' because the listener became confused."

Such was the malice of these rulers against the Brother of the Prophet. During the reign of al-Mu`tasim, when there was a substantial increase in the number of atheists, apostates, and fabricators of *hadith*, who ascended the seat of the "righteous" caliphate, and when people were distracted during al-Mu`tasim's time by marginal problems, in addition to the dilemma caused by Ahmad ibn Hanbal labelling the Holy Qur'an as being infinite in its pre-existence..., people blindly followed the creed of their kings, believing that the Holy Qur'an was "created." When Ahmad ibn Hanbal withdrew his theory regarding the Holy Qur'an, being apprehensive of al-Mu`tasim, he became after that quite famous among scholars of *hadith* like a shining star. It was then decided to add the name of Ali ibn Abu Talib to the list of the "righteous caliphs." It is quite possible that Ahmad ibn Hanbal was dazzled by the authentic *ahadith* enumerating Ali's virtues which surfaced against the wish of the rulers of the time, especially since he is the one who has said,

"Nobody among all people has received as many *ahadith* in his favor as Ali ibn Abu Talib."

It was then that the number of the "righteous caliphs" was increased to four, and Ali's caliphate was regarded as "legitimate" after being rejected due to its "illegitimacy."

The Proof: In the *Tabaqat*, regarded by the Hanbalis as their main reference, Ibn Abu Ya`li quotes Wadeezah al-Himsi as saying: I visited Ahmad ibn Hanbal after having added the name of Ali to the list of the three ["righteous caliphs"]. I said to him, "O Abu Abdullah! What you have done discredits both Talhah and al-Zubayr!" He said, "What a foolish statement you have uttered! What do we have to do with those folks' war, and why do you mention it now?" I said, "May Allah lead you to righteousness, we have mentioned it only after you added the name of Ali and mandated for him (of honors because) of the caliphate what is mandated to the Imams before him!" Said he, "And what stops me from doing so?" I said, "One tradition narrated by Ibn Umar." He said to me, "Umar [ibn al-Khattab] is better than his son, for he accepted (i.e. recommended) Ali's caliphate over the Muslims and listed him among the members of the (consultative) council of *shura*, and Ali referred to himself as the Commander of the Faithful; am I the one to say that the faithful did not have a commander?!" So I left.

This incident clarifies for us the fact that the narrator is the leader of "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah" and their spokesman, and that they rejected Ali's caliphate because of what Abdullah ibn Umar, the Sunnis' *faqih*, says, a statement which al-Bukhari records in his *Sahih*. Since al-Bukhari's *Sahih* is the most authentic book next to the Book of Allah, it is mandatory on them to reject Ali's caliphate and not to recognize it.

In his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes Abdullah ibn Umar saying, "**During the lifetime of the Prophet, we used to regard Abu Bakr most, then Umar ibn al-Khattab, then Uthman ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them.**"

Al-Bukhari quotes another tradition narrated by Ibn Umar which is more frank than this one. In it, Abdullah ibn Umar says: **During the lifetime of the Prophet, we did not regard anyone as being the peer of Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman, then we leave the rest of the Prophet's companions without making any distinction among them.**

It is through "traditions" such as this one that Banu Umayyah permitted cursing, condemning, taunting, and belittling Ali. Their rulers since the reign of Mu`awiyah and till the days of Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan in 132 A.H. ordered the cursing of Ali from the pulpits. All those who supported him or did not endorse such animosity were killed.

Then the Abbaside government started in 132 A.H./750 A.D. with the reign of Abul-Abbas al-Saffah [the blood-shedder]; it was then that dissociation in various means from Ali and from those who supported him continued, and the means of this dissociation varied according to the then prevailing conditions and circumstances because the Abbaside dynasty was erected on the ruins of Ahl al-Bayt and those who followed their line. Some rulers, if the government's interest demanded, did not publicly curse Ali but were secretly doing more than what the Umayyads did.

They learned from the historic experience which highlighted the oppression to which Ahl al-Bayt and their supporters were subjected: such oppression drew the sympathy of people to them; therefore, the rulers cunningly tried to tilt the situation in their favor. They, therefore, sought to be close to the Imams from Ahl al-Bayt not out of love for them, nor recognizing their confiscated rights, but in order to contain the public uprisings which broke out near the borders and which threatened the government's very existence. This is what al-Ma'mun son of Haroun al-Rasheed had done to Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida. But when the government was in full control, and internal dissent was contained, it went to extremes in insulting these Imams and their followers as the Abbaside caliph al-Mutawakkil did. He became quite famous for his hatred of Ali and for cursing him and even desecrating his grave and the grave of his son al-Husayn. It is because of these facts that we have said that "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah" refused to recognize the legitimacy of Ali's caliphate till many years after Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

It is true that Ahmad ibn Hanbal was the first person to promote this notion, but he could not convince the scholars of *hadith*, as we have pointed out to adopt his view due to their following in the footprints of Abdullah ibn Umar. A long time was needed to convince people of it and to let them accept Ahmad ibn Hanbal's view, a view which might have presented the Hanbalis as seeking justice and nearness to Ahl al-Bayt. This distinguished them from other Sunni sects such as the Malikis, Hanafis, and Shafi`is who were vying to gain supporters. They, therefore, had no choice except to accept the view and adopt it. As time passed by, "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah" became unanimous in endorsing Ahmad ibn Hanbal's view, and they agreed to make Ali the fourth of the "righteous caliphs," requiring the faithful to respect him as much as they respected the other three.

"How can this be true while we nowadays see `Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah' loving Imam Ali and seeking Allah to be pleased with him?"

We say: Yes, after the passage of time, and the death of the Imams from Ahl al-Bayt, the rulers had no worry, nor did they face any threat against their government, and when the dignity of the Islamic government disappeared and the Mamlukes, Moguls, and Tatars took control of it, and when the creed weakened and many Muslims were diverted with arts, singing, amusement, promiscuity, wine and concubines..., and when one generation succeeded another that lost the prayers, followed its own low desires..., when right seemed wrong and wrong seemed right, when corruption prevailed on the land and the sea..., it was then and only then that Muslims eulogized their ancestors and sung the praise of their glory. It was then that they yearned for their past history and legacy, calling them their "golden ages." The best of times, from their viewpoint, is the age of the *sahaba* who conquered many lands, expanded the Islamic kingdom in the east and the west, subduing the Kaisers and Caesars. It was then that they started praying to Allah to be pleased with all of them, including Ali ibn Abu Talib, became acceptable.

Because "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah" believe in their justice, all of them, they could not exclude Ali from their list of *sahaba*. Had they excluded him, their scheme would have become evident to everyone who is wise and who researches, so they misled the public into believing that the fourth caliph was the gate of knowledge Ali ibn Abu Talib. We ask them, "Why do you then refuse to emulate him with regard to your religious and secular matters if you truly believe that he was the gate of knowledge?
how can one compare Mu`awiyah to Ali, if you only follow reason?"

All this can be said were one to set aside all the *ahadith* narrated about the Messenger of Allah mandating upon all Muslims to follow Imam Ali after the Prophet and to emulate him. Someone among "Ahl al-Sunnah" may say, "Ali's merits, his being the foremost in embracing Islam, his *jihad* in the cause of Islam, his deep knowledge, his great honors, and his asceticism are known to all people; rather, Ahl al-Sunnah know and love Ali more the followers of the school of Ahlul-bayt do." Such is the statement repeated by many of them these days. To these we say: Where were you and where were your ancestors and scholars when Ali was being cursed from the pulpits for hundreds of years? We never heard, nor does history document any fact, that even one single person among them resented it or prohibited it or was killed because of his loyalty and love for Ali. Nay! We will never come across even one name among all the scholars of "Ahl al-Sunnah" who did so.

Instead, they were close to the monarchs, rulers, and governors because of the allegiance they had sworn to them, because of being pleased with them, and because they issued for them verdicts legalizing the killing of all "rejectionists" who were loyal to Ali and his progeny, and such people are present even in our own time.

They all did so with the exception of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, may Allah be Merciful to him. Tarikh Baghdad, Vol. 8, p. 266.

The only exception are the couple of years during which Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz ruled. He stopped the nefarious custom of cursing, but after his murder, they resumed the cursing and went beyond that to desecrate his grave. They went as far as prohibiting anyone to be named after him...

I have deliberately said "Where were you?" to address contemporary Muslims from "Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama`ah," for they read in Muslim's Sahih that Mu`awiya used to curse Ali and order the sahaba to do likewise, and they do not find it objectionable. Rather, they plead to Allah to be pleased with their master Mu`awiyah to whom they refer as "the revelation's scribe." This proves that their love for Ali is not genuine at all and unworthy of being taken seriously.

Hadith of The Messenger of Allah (saw) referring to Yazeed

Abu Hurraira sought protection from the events of 56 Hijri

1. Al Bidayah wa al Nihaya Volume 8 page 114
2. Fathul Bari Volume 13 page 10 Kitab al Fitan
3. Tareekh al Islam (Dhahabi) Volume 2 page 339 Dhikr Abu Hurraira
4. Al Isaba Volume 4 page 200 Dhikr Abu Hurraira
5. Al Bidaya wa al Nihaya Volume 6 page 228

Abu Hurraira would walk through the markets and 'O Allah don't accept the events of 56 Hijri and I don't see this boy's reign'

In Fathul Bari Ibn Hajr states that:
"Abu Hurraira was referring to the youth of Quraysh"

Abu Said al Khudri's condemnation of 60 Hijri

1. Tafseer Ibn Katheer Volume 3 page 128, Surah Maryam verse 59
2. Mujmu al Zadaad Volume 6 page 231
3. Musnad Ibn Hanbal Volume 3 page 38
4. Fathul Qadeer Volume 3 page 329
5. Al Bidayah wa al Nihaya Volume 8 page 230

Ibn Kathir states:

"The Sahaba Abu Said al Khudri narrates that he heard Rasulullah (s) say after 60 Hijri undeserving people shall ignore prayers and enter the deepest part of Hell".

This hadith is also a condemnation of Yazeed since he became the Leader immediately after 60 Hijri…. (Page 219)

Rasulullah (s) said Yazeed will destroy my religion

We read in al Bidayah Volume 8 page 231 Dhikr Yazeed:
Justice shall rule my Ummah until the first individual who shall destroy my Deen, from the Banu Ummayaa his name shall be Yazeed.

Yazeed is accused of destroying the Deen by the Holy Prophet (saws) himself.

The Character of Yazid from Sunni sources

Yazeed's attack on Harra

We read in 'au khanar al masalik' that Shaykh al hadith Muhammad Zakaria stated:
"The army that Yazeed had sent to Medina comprised of 60,000 horsemen and 15,000 foot soldiers. For three days they shed blood freely, 1000 women were raped and 700 named Quraysh and Ansar were killed. Ten thousand women and children were made slaves. Muslim bin Uqba forced people to give bayya to Yazeed in such a manner that people were enslaved and Yazeed could sell them as he pleased, no Sahaba who were [with the Prophet (saws)] at Hudaibiya were spared".

Ibn Katheer in Al Bidayah Wal Nihayah (Urdu), Vol 8 Page 1146. The events of 63 Hijri, stated:
"Yazeed committed a major sin by ordering Muslim bin Utbah to make Medina Mubah for three days. This was a most horrible mistake. Many Sahaba and their children were slaughtered. We have already mentioned that he had Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad kill the grandson of Rasulullah (s) Husayn and his companions and in those three days numerous heinous acts happened in Madina about which nobody knows except Allah. Yazeed wanted to secure his governance but Allah did against his wishes and punished him. Verily Allah killed him likewise Allah made grip over the oppressor's towns, no doubt His grip is painful and strict".

Al Bidayah Wal Nihayah (Urdu), Vol 8 Page 1146; Nafees Academy Karachi

One who attacks Medina is cursed

We read in Al Bidayah Wal Nihayah (Urdu), Vol 8 Page 1147:
"Rasulullah (s) said whoever perpetuated injustice and frightened the residents of Medina, the curse (la'nat) of Allah (swt), His Angels and all people is on such a person"
Al Bidayah Wal Nihayah (Urdu), Vol 8 Page 1147. Nafees Academy Karachi

Yazeed was a homosexual

We read in al Bidayah wa al Nihayah page 64 Volume 9 "Dhikr Abdul Mulk"
"Abdul Malik bin Marwan said in a khutbah that unlike Uthman I am not weak and unlike Mu'awiya I am not cunning / dishonest and unlike Yazeed I am not a homosexual".

We would ask actual Sunnis to go and ask your imams whether a man that does such a thing is a fasiq (transgressor) or not? Can he be an Imam or not?

Yazeed used to copulate with his mother and sisters

Here we shall cite the following authentic Sunni sources:

1. Tabaqath al Kabeera Volume 5 page 66 Dhikr Abdullah bin Hanzala and Volume 4 page 283
2. Tareekh ul Khulafa, (Urdu), page 210 Dhikr Yazeed
3. Sawqih al Muhriqa page 132 Dhikr Yazeed
4. Mustadrak al Hakim Volume page 522
5. Al Isaba Volume 3 page 469
6. Ya Nabi al Mawaddath page 326
7. Tareekh Ibn Asakir Volume 7 page 275
8. Fatawi Abdul Hai page 79
9. Tareekh al Islam Volume 2 page 356
10. Al Masalaik Sharh Muwatta Imam Malik page 435

We read in Tabaqath:
"Abdullah bin Hanzala the Sahaba stated 'By Allah we opposed Yazeed at the point when we feared that stones would reign down on us from the skies. He was a fasiq who copulated with his mother, sister and daughters, who drank alcohol and did not offer Salat"

Allamah Jalaluddin Suyuti writes in Tareekh ul Khulafa:

"Waqidi has narrated from Abdullah bin Hinzala al Ghaseel: 'We prepared to attack Yazeed at the time when we were sure that stones would come from sky because people were doing Nikah with their mothers, sisters and daughters. They were drinking alcohol and have left prayers'."
Tareekh ul Khulafa (Urdu) page 210 published by Nafees Academy Karachi

Ibn Kathir's comments on Yazeed

Ibn Kathir is the Wahabi's biggest historian and a student of Ibn Taymiyya himself. As far as Wahabis are concerned, his words are written in gold. Yet Ibn Kathir himself writes in al Bidayah Volume 8 page 1169 "Dhikr Yazeed bin Muawiyah":

"Traditions inform us that Yazeed loved worldly vices, would drink, listen to music, kept the company of boys with no facial hair [civil expression for paedophilia with boys, a form of homosexuality], played drums, kept dogs [civil expression for
bestiality], making frogs, bears and monkeys fight. Every morning he used be intoxicated and use to bind monkey with the saddle of a horse and make the horse run…".

Al Bidayah Wal Nihayah (Urdu), Vol 8 Page 1169, Nafees Academy Karachi

Ibn Atheer's comments on Yazeed

In Tareekh al Kamil Volume 3 page 450 Ibn Atheer narrates from Munzir bin Zabeer:

"Verily Yazeed rewarded me with 100,000 dirhams but this cannot stop me from highlighting his state, By Allah he is a drunkard…"

Why does the Ahlul sunna wa Jamaah vigorously defend the reign of Yazeed?

This is one of those questions that automatically comes to mind when one analyses the character of Yazeed.

The reason lies in aqeedah, and goes to the heart of where the Sunni / Shi'a viewpoints diverge. The core difference between the two schools is on the topic of Imamate: who has the right to lead the Ummah.

Shi'a Muslims believe that this leadership is religious guidance and hence the appointment is the sole right of Allah (swt), for He (swt) knows what is best for his Servants and He (swt) shall appoint the man best suited / most superior to lead the Ummah through all times. Allah (swt) will select an Imam who is best in character, most excelled on the components of Deen, who shall only rule via justice There is no need for ijma, or votes since Allah (swt) appoints and no one has a voice in the matter.

The Ahl'ul Sunnah believe that the appointment of the Imam is a duty of the Public – they decide on who comes to power. The importance in relation to appointment is the act of giving bayya - once the Khalifah has received ijma then his imamate is legitimate. The act of bayya is the crucial factor here - the people decide who is in power (a democratically elected dictatorship for life), and the khalifa's character has no further bearing since once in power the Khalifah has to be obeyed. Any opposition is squashed, with violence. From the time of Mu'awiya onwards, all the khalifates become monarchies.

When this is the basis for Ahl'ul Sunnah aqeedah, then over time their jurists have sought to revise the concept of imamate with stipulations over certain characteristics that Imam should possess, such as bravery, piety, and justice, especially after the embarrassing debacle (for Sunni Islam) with Yazeed and certain other members of the Banu Umayyad dynasty – for example the khalifa Waleed who expressed his desire to drink alcohol on the roof of the Ka'aba.

Unfortunately these writings have been nothing more than a 'Dear Santa Wish List' since an analysis of early Islamic history will quickly lead to us learning that characteristics such as justice were completely devoid in these Khalifahs, and there is no better example than Yazeed. Indeed with the exception of perhaps Umar bin Abdul Aziz in 1,100 years of khilafat after Yazeed, barely a pious man acceded to this position. Most were as bad as kings anywhere were.

This left many classical Salaf scholars with a very difficult problem: If they reject Yazeed, they are then rejecting the concept of ijma that had been allegedly created at Saqifa Bani Sa'ada, and underpins Sunni Islam

Rejecting this ijma'a in effect discredits Sunni aqeedah that the duty to appoint the imam is the right of the public.

If this concept is discredited, by highlighting Yazeed's demonic character and satanic actions, then the Ummah is forced to consider the alternative option of appointment as ascribed to by the Shi'a school of thought.

The Salaf Ulema, faced with this difficult problem, have decided to uphold the legitimacy of Yazeed's reign since this is the only way that their belief in man made appointment can be maintained. This accounts for their pathological and indeed blatant lying, which embarrasses even the Nasibis. We shall now seek to set out the consequence of this belief…

Rasulullah (s) said that he would be suceeded by twelve khalifahs

We are quoting from Sahih Muslim hadith number 4483, English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui:

"The Islamic religion will continue, until the hour has been established, or you have been ruled over by 12 Caliphs, all of them being from Quraish".

This is what we read in Mishkat al Masabih:

"I heard the Apostle of Allah say 'Islam shall not cease to be glorious up to twelve Caliphs, every one of them being from the Quraish". (And in a narration) "The affairs of men will not cease to decline so long as twelve men will rule over them, every one of them coming from Quraysh." And in a narration: "The religion will continue to be established till the hour comes as there are twelve Caliphs over them, everyone of them coming from the Quraish"

Mishkat al Masabih: (Vol 4 p 576), Hadith 5

Who are these 12 caliphs? Can you name them?